



February 11, 2015

Hon. Andrew M. Maynard and Hon. Antonio Guerrero
Co-Chairs, Transportation Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 2300
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Support for Proposed Bill No. 504: An Act Concerning a Study of Commuter Rail Service to Torrington

Dear Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee:

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG) recently voted to support S.B. No. 504: An Act Concerning a Study of Commuter Rail Service to Torrington.

The Torrington-Waterbury branch line is approximately 21 miles in length and at one time serviced many of the industrial areas along the Naugatuck River. While the branch line is only marginally active for freight use at present, tourist passenger train service between Waterbury and Torrington has recently been offered on a periodic and seasonal basis.

While the Torrington-Waterbury branch line has been rehabilitated to Class 2 standards, which provide for travel speeds up to 25 miles per hour, interest has been expressed in recent years in the potential of upgrading the line to Class 3 standards which would enable full commuter passenger service along this line. An important first step in pursuing this opportunity is a feasibility study to better document potential ridership and rail line improvement costs. S.B. 504 would provide for such a feasibility study.

The "Litchfield Hills Regional Transportation Plan", prepared by the LHCEO in 2008, recognizes the Torrington-Waterbury branch line as a significant regional transportation resource. The NHCOG, representing 21 municipalities in northwest Connecticut, urges your support of S.B. 504 to more fully explore the potential commuter use of this rail line. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Donald S. Stein, Chairman and
First Selectman of Barkhamsted

cc: NHCOG Members, Area Legislators